

Message Text

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20

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 AID-20 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11 FRB-02

INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 TRSE-00 XMB-07 OPIC-12 CIEP-02

LAB-06 SIL-01 OMB-01 IO-12 AGR-20 RSR-01 SCI-06

NASA-04 /135 W

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P R 191030 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6989

INFO AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY FORT LAMY

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY ROME

UNCLAS BAMAKO 1121

E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: EAID, XY

SUBJECT: SAHELIAN DROUGHT AND SATELLITE PHOTOGRAPHY

1. INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT MINISTER ROBERT N' DAW, SAYING HE WAS SPEAKING FOR PRESIDENT TRAORE, REQUESTED FROM AMBASSADOR IMMEDIATE ASSIGNMENT AMERICAN INVESTIGATORS TO EXAMINE ERTS IMAGERY DROUGHT AREAS OF MALI, WITH HOPE DETERMING MORE ABOUT DROUGHT EFFECTS ON WATER SUPPLIES, CROPS, AND PASTURES. HE PROPOSED THAT, ALONG WITH MALIAN COUNTERPARTS, AMERICAN INVESTIGATORS EXAMINE ON THE SPOT DROUGHT EFFECTS ON PLANTS AND ON WATER SUPPLIES, AND MAKE SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS ON WHAT ACTION MALI SHOULD TAKE. HE HOPED US INVESTIGATORS COULD BE ON SPOT TO LOOK AT DROUGHT DAMAGE BEFORE RAINS START - IN JUNE. N' DAW SAID THAT AT JUST CONCLUDED OMVS SUMMIT CONFERENCE AT DAKAR, CHIEFS OF STATE OF MAURITANIA, SENEGAL, AND MALI ALL AGREED TO MAKE PARALLEL REQUESTS BUT HE NOT AUTHORIZED TO SPEAK FOR OTHERS. AMBASSADOR SAID HE WOULD TRANSMIT REQUEST, BUT WARNED THAT FIRST- CLASS AGRONOMISTS UNCLASSIFIED

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AND HYDROLOGISTS SKILLED ALSO IN INTERPRETATION SATELLITE PHOTOS ARE VERY RARE. ALSO, EVEN THOUGH IT MIGHT BE DESIRABLE FOR

VISIT TAKE PLACE BEFORE RAINS, ONLY TWO MONTHS LEFT.

2. COMMENT: I STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT USG BE AS RESPONSIVE AS POSSIBLE TO MALIAN REQUEST. THIS IS A VERY NORMAL AND TIMELY EXTENSION OF US- MALIAN COOPERATION IN SPACE PHOTOGRAPHY INTERPRETATION, AND ONE THAT IS VERY RELEVANT TO MALI'S AND SAHEL'S IMMEDIATE NEEDS. BELIEVE WE SHOULD IF AT ALL POSSIBLE HELP NOT JUST MALI AND OMVS MEMBERS BUT OTHER SAHELIAN STATES, TOO. THIS WOULD BE IMPORTANT AND UNIQUE FORM OF AMERICAN HELP AND COULD SERVE AS PART OF LARGER PACKAGE RELATED TO SAHELIAN DROUGHT WHICH WE UNDERSTAND WILL BE DISCUSSED APRIL 22 IN ROME. IN FACT, SEMINAR ON USES SATELLITE PHOTOGRAPHY SPONSORED BY US AND MALI, WHICH OPENED APRIL 17 IN BAMAKO, IS DISCUSSING PRECISELY HOW ERTS IMAGERY CAN BE USED TO BETTER UNDERSTAND SAHELIAN DROUGHT AND HOW TO COMBAT IT. OUR ERTS TECHNICIANS BELIEVE THAT THROUGH JUST SUCH APPROACH AS GOM SUGGESTS THERE ARE FASCINATING POSSIBILITIES OF GAINING INFORMATION ON DROUGHT FROM INTERPRETATION SATELLITE PHOTOS WHICH COULD NOT BE DEVELOPED ANY OTHER WAY. IN PROCESS OF CARRYING IT OUT, MANY MORE BASIC FACTS ABOUT WHOLE SAHELIAN AREA WOULD BE LEARNED. EMPHASIS SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE ON EXPERIMENTAL NATURE WHOLE PROJECT, FACT WHICH CONSTANTLY BEING STRESSED DURING SEMINAR.

3. AS WE SEE IT, PROGRAM WOULD INVOLVE (A) MAKING AVAILABLE TO SAHELIAN GOVERNMENTS, AND PERHAPS TO FAO, ERTS IMAGERY OF DROUGHT AREAS TAKEN AT REGULAR INTERVALS BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER DROUGHT - IN FACT, HOPEFULLY AS LONG AS ERTS-1 STILL IN OPERATION: (B) HELPING SAHELIAN COUNTRIES TO INTERPRET THESE PHOTOS, AND (C) HAVING AMERICAN INVESTIGATORS JOIN IN " GROUND TRUTH" INVESTIGATIONS TO CONFIRM ON GROUND WHAT IS SEEN IN PHOTOS. BASIC DISCIPLINES WHICH WOULD BE PARTICULARLY INVOLVED WOULD, WE BELIEVE, INCLUDE HYDROLOGY (UNDERGROUND WATER, RIVER FLOWS, WATER DISPERSION IN RIVER BASINS, MEADOWS, ETC.) AND AGRICULTURE (REACTION OF 1973 CROPS TO DROUGHT, REACTION OF GRASS LANDS UNDER STRESS OF DROUGHT, ETC.). METEOROLOGICAL DATA FROM NIMBUS SYSTEM MIGHT ALSO BE STUDIED.

4. WE BELIEVE BEST WAY TO ORGANIZE EFFORTS WITH SAHELIAN STATES WOULD BE FOR USG TO HAVE LIMITED BILATERAL PROGRAMS WITH EACH SAHELIAN COUNTRY WHEREBY ONCE A GIVEN COUNTRY RECEIVES PICTURES, UNCLASSIFIED

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AMERICAN INVESTIGATOR WOULD ASSIST IN THEIR INTERPRETATION AND THEN PARTICIPATE IN " GROUND TRUTH" CONFIRMATION. IN FIRST STAGES, MOST OF REAL ANALYSIS WOULD PROBABLY BE DONE BY AMERICAN SPECIALISTS. N'DAW TOLD ME THAT PRESIDENT TRAORE INDICATED MALI READY FULLY SHARE INTERPRETATION EQUIPMENT WHICH GOM HAS, AND THIS WOULD SAVE EQUIPMENT COSTS. INFORMATION ONCE DEVELOPED BY EACH COUNTRY WOULD BE EXCHANGED WITH ALL OTHER PARTICIPANTS.

5. ALTERNATIVE WOULD BE TO HAVE STUDIES MADE BY (A) FAO OR OTHER

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION OR (B) BY AFRICAN REGIONAL ORGANIZATION. PROBLEM WITH (B) IS THAT NONE OF THESE ORGANIZATIONS EXCEPT OAU EVEN BEGINS TO COVER WHOLE DROUGHT AREA. ALSO, SAHELIAN STATES WOULD PROBABLY NOT WELCOME THIS METHOD BECAUSE THESE ORGANIZATIONS STILL ARE TOO SLOW AND BUREAUCRATIC. WORKING THROUGH FAO WOULD BE POSSIBLE. THERE IS, I UNDERSTAND, PROSPECTIVE SMALL UNDP PROJECT PROPOSED BY FAO WHEREBY DR. JOHN HOWARD OF FAO WOULD GET ERTS IMAGERY FOR SAHEL AND WOULD, WITH AMERICAN INVESTIGATORS, STUDY SAHELIAN DROUGHT. BUT WHY NOT GET CREDIT FOR US IN THIS TYPICALLY AMERICAN FIELD BY CARRYING OUT PROJECT UNDER OUR OWN AUSPICES? PASSING RESULTS TO FAO?

6. HOW WOULD ALL THIS FIT IN WITH US- MALIAN PROGRAM? WE SO NO PROBLEM. MALIAN PROGRAM HAS NOT YET BECOME STRONG ENOUGH ON AGRICULTURAL SIDE OF SATELLITE INTERPRETATION AND PROPOSED DROUGHT PROJECT WOULD HAVE EFFECT OF STRENGTHENING THIS CAPABILITY. ALSO USE OF MALIAN INTERPRETATION FACILITIES BY INVESTIGATORS IN OTHER SAHELIAN STATES WOULD NOT ONLY SAVE EQUIPMENT COSTS BUT WOULD HAVE PRATICAL EFFECT OF FURTHERING SAHELIAN COOPERATION IN THIS NEW AND IMPORTANT FIELD.

7. WHATEVER WAY SUCH A PROGRAM IS ORGANIZED, AND WHETHER OR NOT IT ACCEPTED, DEPT SHOULD CONSIDER REQUESTING NASA KEEP TAKING PERIODIC ERTS-1 PHOTOS OF SAHELIAN DROUGHT AREA JUST AS LONG AS TAPE RECORDER HOLDS OUT. HOPEFULLY, ALSO DECISION WILL BE TAKEN TO LAUNCH ERTS - B, THUS MAKING FURTHER SERIES OF IMAGES SAHELIAN DROUGHT AREAS AVAILABLE. DEPARTMENT SHOULD ALSO REQUEST NASA TO FACILITATE RECORDING AND TRANSMISSION OF SAHELIAN IMAGERY BY ACTIVATING CAPABILITY OF NASA TRACKING STATION IN CANARY ISLANDS TO RECORD ERTS DATA AND TRANSMIT IT TO GODDARD SPACE FLIGHT CENTER FOR PROCESSING AND DISTRIBUTION TO AFRICAN INVESTIGATORS.

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